



## **Town Council Meeting**

**July 10, 2023 at 6:00 PM**

**Howey-in the-Hills Town Hall 101  
N. Palm Ave., Howey-in-the-Hills,  
FL 34737**

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### **MINUTES**

Mayor MacFarlane called the Town Council Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.  
Mayor MacFarlane led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.  
Councilor Reneé Lannamañ delivered an invocation.

#### **ROLL CALL**

Acknowledgement of Quorum

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Councilor Reneé Lannamañ | Councilor David Miles | Councilor George Lehning | Mayor Pro Tem Marie V. Gallelli | Mayor Martha MacFarlane

#### **STAFF PRESENT:**

Sean O'Keefe, Town Administrator | John Brock, Town Clerk | Tom Harowski, Town Planner (Zoom) | George Brown, Police Lieutenant | Tom Wilkes, Town Attorney | Rick Thomas, Police Chief | Morgan Cates, Public Works Director

#### **AGENDA APPROVAL/REVIEW**

**Motion made by Councilor Lannamañ to approve the meeting's agenda; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.**

#### **Voting**

**Yea:** Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Councilor Lehning, Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli, Mayor MacFarlane  
**Nay:** None

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

*Routine items are placed on the Consent Agenda to expedite the meeting. If Town Council/Staff wish to discuss any item, the procedure is as follows: (1) Pull the item(s) from the Consent Agenda; (2) Vote on the remaining item(s); and (3) Discuss each pulled item and vote.*

1. The approval of the minutes and ratification and confirmation of all Town Council actions at the June 26, 2023 Town Council Workshop.

2. The approval of the minutes and ratification and confirmation of all Town Council actions at the June 26, 2023 Town Council Meeting.
3. Consideration and Approval: **SMW Geosciences Proposal for Well Drilling Design, Compliance, and Oversight Services**

**Motion made by Councilor Lannamañ to approve the Consent Agenda; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli. Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.**

**Voting**

**Yea:** Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Councilor Lehning, Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli, Mayor MacFarlane

**Nay:** None

Mayor MacFarlane asked Sarah Whitaker from SMW Geosciences to introduce herself. Ms. Whitaker introduced herself and asked the Town Council if they had any questions.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

None

**OLD BUSINESS**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

4. Discussion: **FGUA Presentation on Water and Wastewater**

Mayor MacFarlane asked the Florida Government Utility Authority (FGUA) representatives to introduce themselves and begin their presentation. Scott Towler from FGUA and Mark Tuma from Raftelis introduced themselves and gave their presentation.

Mr. Towler mentioned that FGUA had just completed a more detailed sewer analysis for the Town of Coleman in Sumter County. Councilor Lannamañ stated that she would like to be provided with the sewer analysis that had been completed for the Town of Coleman.

Mr. Tuma stated that the average wastewater treatment cost in communities surrounding the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills was \$55 a month. It was mentioned that, in addition the cost to treat the wastewater, (if the Town received no grant assistance) the probable cost of a monthly non-ad valorem fee that could be assessed to existing “old Howey” residents could be between \$205 to \$245 and then there could be an additional assessment cost on monthly utility bills of \$54 to \$64 for all existing and future parcels. If the Town received grants that would cover 50% of the costs, non-ad valorem assessment and monthly addition fee on the utility bill could be cut in half.

Mayor MacFarlane opened Public Comment for this item only.

**Sarah Whitaker, Town CUP Consultant** – Ms. Whitaker stated that it would be a benefit for the Town to have its own wastewater treatment plant as it would create a source of irrigation water for the Town. Ms. Whitaker cautioned that the Town would also need a backup source of irrigation water such as surface water.

**Peter Tuite, 300 E Croton Way** – Mr. Tuite wanted to know what would happen if a property owner did not want to connect to the sewer system.

**Tim Everline, 1012 N. Lakeshore Blvd.** – Mr. Everline had questions about the non-ad valorem assessments that existing “old Howey” residents would be charged to hook up to the new sewer system.

**Todd Hawkins, 1110 N Lakeshore Blvd.** – Asked about the Town’s prospects for getting a grant to pay for up to 50% of the cost. Mr. Hawkins stated that the current system of existing Howey utilizing septic systems was pretty good. Mr. Hawkins stated that growth should pay for growth and that developers should front the cost of a sewer system for the Town.

**Diane Ballou, 1005 N Tangerine Ave** – Mrs. Ballou had questions about the cost for residents of old Howey.

Mayor MacFarlane closed Public Comment.

5. Discussion: **Wastewater Planning**

Mayor MacFarlane shared a proposal that she had received from Central Lake CDD. This proposal consisted of the Central Lake CDD selling additional ERU capacity to the Town and running lines to the North part of the Town that could be used for future development on the north side and existing development on the north side. Additionally, the Central Lake CDD was willing to sell additional ERU capacity to the Town for existing portions of the Town. This proposal had many provisions, such as the town signing an exclusivity agreement with the Central Lake CDD to be the sole provider of wastewater treatment for the Town and having an agreement with no potential end date.

Councilor Miles questioned why the Town would consider spending millions of dollars to improve a privately owned wastewater treatment plant.

Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli stated that there were items in the proposal that she did not like, and that the public should have time to review this proposal.

Councilor Lannamañ stated that she specifically did not like the exclusivity agreement, the agreement running in perpetuity and the cost increases laid out for current customers of the Central Lake CDD.

Mayor MacFarlane opened Public Comment for this item only.

**Suong Miles, 500 E Camelia Way** – Mrs. Miles was not in favor of the town further connecting to the Central Lake CDD for wastewater treatment.

**Wendy Zermeno, 25896 Bloomfield Ave., Howey-in-the-Hills (unincorporated Lake County)** – Mrs. Zermeno stated that she thought any and all options should be considered.

**Tim Everline, 1012 N. Lakeshore Blvd.** – Mr. Everline stated that the Town should do nothing to upgrade the Central Lake CDD wastewater treatment plant without getting something in return.

Mayor MacFarlane closed Public Comment.

Councilor Miles stated that he would like to bring up other possible wastewater options during the 7/13/2023 Town Council Budget Workshop.

6. Discussion: **SRO Contract Update**

Mayor MacFarlane asked Town Manager, Sean O’Keefe, to introduce and explain this item. Mr. O’Keefe stated that the Lake County School Board had rejected the proposal that the Town Council had sent to the School Board for supplying the three School Resource Officers (SRO) to the three schools located with the Town. The Lake County School Board countered with an offer that was roughly

\$40,000 less than what the Town had been paid during the 2022-2023 school year to supply the three SROs.

Councilor Miles stated that he would like to make a motion to accept the School Board's offer but asking them to pay for the Officer's life insurance costs. Mayor MacFarlane stated that due to timing, the Town should just accept the current offer and not worry about the small cost that the Town would have from the life insurance costs.

**Motion made by Councilor Miles to accept the Lake County School Boards offer; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli. Motion approved unanimously by roll-call vote.**

**Voting**

**Yea:** Councilor Lannamañ, Councilor Miles, Councilor Lehning, Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli, Mayor MacFarlane

**Nay:** None

7. Consideration and Approval: **FY 2024 Budget Public Hearing Dates Selection**

Public Hearing dates and times were selected. The first millage and budget public hearing date would be Thursday, September 7, 2023 at 5:05 PM. The second and final millage and budget public hearing date was set for Monday September 25, 2023 at 5:05 PM.

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

8. Town Hall

The department report was included in the packet for the meeting.

9. Police Department

Police Chief Thomas spoke about how, during an unlawful speed stop that had been made the night before the Town Council meeting, the officer discovered that the speeder had been carrying the illicit drug fentanyl.

10. Code Enforcement

The department report was included in the packet for the meeting.

11. Public Works

Public Works Director, Morgan Cates, stated that the Town had conducted a pre-construction meeting with Paquette paving contractor about the N. Dixie Rd reconstruction project and that they had started the project the day of the Town Council Meeting. Mr. Cates also stated that the company would provide a quote for fixing some of the potholes in Town.

Mr. Cates stated that he had made an offer to fill the open Maintenance Worker II position.

12. Library

The department report was included in the packet for the meeting.

13. Parks & Recreation Advisory Board / Special Events

Nothing to report.

14. Town Attorney

Tom Wilkes, Town Attorney, gave an update on the McGill lawsuit. Mr. Wilkes also stated that the Town would need to justify the cost of impact fees if it wished to start collecting them for road and wastewater.

15. Finance Supervisor

The department report was included in the packet for the meeting.

16. Town Manager

Town Manager, Sean O'Keefe, announced dates for future meetings including the Water Treatment Plant #3 Groundbreaking on 7/20/2023, the Budget Workshop on 7/13/2023, and the DRC Meeting on 7/13/2023.

### **COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS**

17. Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli

Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli asked Lt. George Brown when the next Events Committee Meeting would take place and Lt. Brown stated that he would get with the Town Clerk soon to set the date. Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli asked the Town Attorney if the Town could annex the Citrus Plant. Mr. Wilkes stated that they would have to volunteer to do so. Mr. O'Keefe stated that he had recently had a conversation with the current plant manager and that the plant might be willing to annex if the Town could provide a backup source of water for the plant.

Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli stated that she would like to see a wastewater workshop with the community at the Library LEC sometime in the future.

18. Councilor Lehning

Councilor Lehning had nothing to report.

19. Councilor Miles

Councilor Miles stated that he had recently driven through the Talichet neighborhood and had seen steep incline that he believed would need to have a retaining wall. Public Works Director Cates stated that he had already spoken to the builder in the neighborhood and informed them that they were required to build a retaining wall for the steep incline that Councilor Miles had pointed out.

Councilor Miles had questions about the three homes at the back of the Venezia neighborhood that did not seem to match the rest of the neighborhood. Councilor Lannamañ stated that those three houses, along with a fourth parcel next to them, were not part of the Venezia HOA, as they had not been owned by the developer who created the Venezia neighborhood.

Councilor Miles mentioned the Water Treatment Plant #3 Groundbreaking and asked when the drilling for the two wells would commence. Mr. O'Keefe stated it would be soon and he would try to get an exact date.

Councilor Miles suggested that the Town's Library should place an article on some of its events in the Orlando newspaper, as other Lake County Libraries were doing.

20. Councilor Lannamañ

Councilor Lannamañ stated that people had let her know that they were offended by the way some other people had described the children that attended some of the schools within the Town's borders and that the way the children had been described was grossly inappropriate.

Councilor Lannamañ also stated that she had seen a picture of a local developer's sign that had been vandalized, and that this too was not appropriate, and it was against the law.

21. Mayor MacFarlane

Mayor MacFarlane mentioned an online packet/course that the Florida League of Cities had created called "Let's Balance" about the municipal budget process. Mayor MacFarlane stated that the other Town Councilors should view the packet and that the Town should put on this public workshop for the upcoming budget season.

Mayor MacFarlane reminded the Town Council and staff that none of the money the Town had received from the state appropriation could be spent on the design of the Water Treatment Plant.

Mayor MacFarlane referenced the Town Manager's earlier remark about the conversation he had with the Manager of the Citrus Plant about the prospect of the Citrus Plant annexing into the Town. She told the Town Manager that he needed to make sure that this conversation was followed up with a written communication with the Citrus Plant Manager and the higher-ups of the Citrus Plant.

Mayor MacFarlane questioned the side setbacks that she had seen in Talichet phase 2, saying that she believed that they may not be set up according to the developer's agreement. Morgan Cates, Public Works Director, stated that he had personally measured the setbacks and they were correct.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

*Any person wishing to address the Mayor and Town Council and who is not on the agenda is asked to speak their name and address. Three (3) minutes is allocated per speaker.*

**Janet Pratt, 1102 Mission Ln** – Mrs. Pratt wanted to know where the new water treatment plant would be located.

**Joshua Husemann, 671 Avila Pl** – Mr. Husemann recommended that new homes should have permeable pavers installed as their driveways.

**Tina St. Clair, 135 E Central Ave.** – Mrs. St. Clair wanted to know why the Police Department was not enforcing the stop sign at Central and Lakeshore for bicyclists that were not even slowing down when going through it.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**There being no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Gallelli to adjourn the meeting; Councilor Lannamañ seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.**

The Meeting adjourned at 9:11 p.m. | **Attendees: 57**

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Mayor Martha MacFarlane

ATTEST:

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John Brock, Town Clerk